

# Sydney's Wu Style Roots

The guidance of a high level Taijiquan master can help the receptive student understand deeper levels of their chosen internal martial art. The problem facing many potential Taijiquan students is where to find such a master! Whilst Australia has a relatively small population and seems hidden away “down-under” – we have been very fortunate to have many respected masters come to establish schools here and/or visit to give workshops and guest appearances.

One of these masters is Li Shen-Guang/Sam Li. Master Li came to Australia with his family in 1988 from Shanghai, China. As a Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioner he established a Chinese Medical Clinic and taught Taijiquan for free to help teach the Chinese method of maintaining health. With the often irrational logic of the West, however, classes weren't filling! It wasn't long before Master Li found that Westerners are suspicious of anything given freely – so he started to charge a small fee per class and the classes rapidly filled!

It was at one of these classes where I first started my training under Master Li. After researching many styles of martial arts, I had finally found a master with a profound understanding of Taiji philosophy, inspiring Taijiquan form and an open and honest character who treats all people from highest to lowest levels of society with equal respect and kindness. I believe there are many masters of this calibre teaching in society but they can be hard to find! It seems that the higher the quality of the master - the harder it is to find them as they are by nature very modest!

The roots of this high level of Wu style Taiji are traced directly back to the source. Master Li's father is Grand Master Li Li-Qun. Both were taught directly by renowned Wu stylists, Masters Ma Yue-Liang and Wu Ying-Hua (both of whom have unfortunately passed away). Grandmaster Li was a disciple of Master Ma and his son Li Shen Guang an indoor student. Master Wu Ying-Hua was the only daughter of Wu Jian-Quan and together with Master Ma taught the Masters Li; Wu style Slow Form, Fast Form, Single and Double Broadsword, 13 and 24 Spear and Wu style's highly developed Pushing Hands.

Grand Master Li is now in his eighties and still teaching all over the world. Also a Qi Gong master, together with his son he went on to establish several Qi Gong clinics in China and developed “Step Back Qi Gong”, one of the 21 forms of Qi Gong officially recognised by the Chinese Government. He is also the Wu style representative at the annual Yong Nian Int'l Taiji Conference, Hon.Chairman of USA's Wu Style Taiji Association and Managing Director of the Shanghai Society for Qi Gong Rehabilitation. He is also the author of books on all Wu style forms, as well as Qi Gong.

His son, Master Li Shen-Guang has for several years been the Principal of The Australian College Of Tai Chi & Qi Gong based in Sydney's Sutherland Shire. He now has several instructors undergoing training and has hundreds of students attending weekly classes, workshops and retreats. Master Li is also an acupuncturist at his Caringbah Healthcare Centre.

With roots so strong, there is no doubt the Wu style lineage will continue to remain strong and flourish around the world.

**Rachel Addison is an instructor under Master Li.**

**Australian College of Tai Chi and Qi Gong**

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